

NOAA Fisheries Establishes Effective Dates For Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) On Directed Shark Vessels

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) published a final rule in the Federal Register on August 17, 2004 (69 FR 51010), that lifts the stay on the requirement to have a NOAA-approved, VMS unit installed and operating on vessels with a directed shark limited access permit. The VMS requirement provides that:

- As of **November 15, 2004**, directed shark vessels with gillnet gear onboard, regardless of location, will be required to have VMS installed and operating during Right Whale Calving Season (November 15 – March 31); and,
- As of **January 1, 2005**, directed shark vessels with bottom longline fishing gear onboard that are located between 33° and 36° 30' N latitude will be required to have VMS installed and operating during the mid-Atlantic shark closure (January 1 – July 31).

The VMS requirement was finalized on December 24, 2003 (68 FR 74746), and was delayed pending a type-approval notice that was published on April 15, 2004 (69 FR 19979). The final rule will make the requirement effective but not modify the substantive requirements.

NOAA Fisheries has a limited number of VMS units available to lend to fishermen who currently have a directed shark permit. If you are interested in obtaining one of these units, please contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz by **September 24, 2004**, via phone at (301) 713-2347 x111, fax at (301) 713-1917, or email at Karyl.Brewster-Geisz@noaa.gov.

For more information regarding approved mobile transmitting units or for installation information please contact Jonathon Pinkerton, National VMS Program Manager, phone: 301-427-2300, fax: 301-427-2055.

Approved VMS Mobile Transceivers	Approved VMS Communications Service Providers
INMARSAT-C	INMARSAT -C
Thrane & Thrane Fishery “Capsat” TT-3022D-NMFS and “Mini-C” TT-3026-NMFS	Xantic
Trimble Galaxy TNL7005 and Galaxy Courier TNL8005	Telenor
ORBCOMM Stellar ST2500G-NMFS	ORBCOMM
	Stratos

This FAX notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. For further information regarding this final rule or the VMS requirement contact Mike Clark, Chris Rilling, or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at (301) 713-2347. Official notice of Federal fishing actions is made through filling such notice with the Office of Federal Register.

Alan D. Risenhoover for
John H. Dunnigan
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

August 20, 2004
Dated